

Fleeing from a stolen car? Be sure to take your cellphone

By Ryan Miller

Yakima Herald

Updated Jul 28, 2016



If you steal a vehicle, don't leave your cellphone behind.

The state Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the conviction of a man after Yakima police used his cellphone to track him down.

Adrian Sutlej Samalia, 26, argued that police should have had a search warrant before accessing his phone, which was left behind when police said he ran from a stolen vehicle.

The high court upheld Samalia's May 2013 conviction in Yakima County Superior Court, saying he lost his constitutionally protected privacy for the cellphone when he abandoned it in the stolen vehicle while running from police, the opinion said.

The case dates in December 2011, when Yakima police stopped a stolen car.

Samalia got out of the vehicle, refusing commands from police and ran away, according to court records.

In the car police found a cellphone, which they used to track down Samalia, who was eventually convicted of possession of a stolen motor vehicle.